

Southern Connecticut State University
School of Health and Human Services
Department of Social Work
501 Crescent Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06515

Subject: Support for HB 5286 An Act Concerning Licensure of Masters and Clinical Social Worker.

Public Hearing March 1, 2010

Dear Senator Harris and Representative Ritter, co-chairs of the Public Health Committee, and honorable committee members:

I am George Appleby, Professor of Social Work at Southern Connecticut State University. I speak to you as a professor/dean with over thirty years responsibility for the preparation of the last several generations of social workers for this state. The master degree in social work requires 60 graduate credits along with two full-year clinical internships ending with a practice-based research thesis. This is a rigorous graduate program preparing students for advanced clinical work in the areas of services for children and families, mental health and substance abuse, health care, gerontology and education. MSW programs are highly competitive and our graduates are well regarded.

Please support the Multi-Level Social Work Licensure bill (HB 5286) before the Public Health committee. You have supported this bill in the past and I thank you for your vote.

We need additional licensure levels in Connecticut to address several workforce issues,

- to enhance revenue,
- to protect consumers,
- to set standards of professional practice.

The current system creates a catch 22 for recent MSW graduates because you need a license for most entry clinical jobs but without work experiences you cannot get licensed.

Passage of this bill would encourage recent graduates to remain in the Connecticut workforce. Currently, more and more agencies require Healthcare Certification, the Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), which requires two years (3,000 hours) of full time clinically supervised practice before being eligible to sit for the LCSW exam. Often our graduates go elsewhere to gain this experience. Multiple level licensing would encourage new MSW graduates to find work in Connecticut, which matches their professional preparation.

There are seven social work programs in this state, five are sponsored by state universities, and therefore this avenue for licensure provides a return on this State's upfront investment in education. The revenue generated by this bill would be anywhere between \$406,000 and \$219, 000 the first year and \$187,000 annually.

Passage would protect consumers by increasing the professionalization of social service agency staff. This bill creates accountability measures for all social work practitioners. Only licensed clinical social workers will be allowed to practice independently. All social work settings demand qualified, competent social workers, which can only be ensured by a licensed workforce. This bill is consistent with a standard of practice set by 45 states and the District of Columbia. All neighboring states have multiple levels of social work licensure.

I look forward to your support and shall contact your office if there are any questions.

Sincerely,
George Appleby, PhD, MSW, LCSW
Professor of Social Work